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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to identify alternatives to the traditional school or college program for earning credit or credentials at the secondary and postsecondary levels, to present the policy of the New York State Board of Regents on the award of credit or credentials for nontraditional educational experiences, and to describe the benefits of nontraditional educational experiences to students, educational institutions, and communities. The first section discusses such policy issues as what qualifies as nontraditional learning; who can provide, recognize, and assess nontraditional educational experiences for credit or credentials; and who can establish criteria for awarding credit or credentials and the purposes for which they can be used. The second and third sections deal with secondary and postsecondary nontraditional educational programs that result in credit or credentials. Each section describes the scope of programs. In addition, the section on secondary programs discusses adolescent vocational exploration, cooperative occupational education, external high school diplomas, general work experience, high school equivalency through postsecondary credit or General Educational Development tests, and work experience and career exploration. The section on postsecondary programs discusses college-level examinations, college proficiency examinations, advanced placement of the College Board, defense activity for nontraditional education support, military service schools and occupational specialties, postsecondary cooperative education and programs that credit life experiences, and the Regents College degree program and examinations. (MN)

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RECOGNITION OF NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Guide to the Award of High School and Postsecondary Credit for Experiential Learning Under the Job Training Partnership Act

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Albany, New York 12234

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Under the Job Training Partnership Act

The University of the State of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office for Policy Analysis
Albany, NY 12234

July 1987

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FOREWORD

In October of 1983 the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) succeeded the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) as the nation's primary employment and training program. The new legislation represented a significant shift in emphasis from public work experience and short term training to the acquisition of basic and occupational skills. The rationale behind the change was that emphasis on longer term education and training improved the likelihood of employment in careers with potential for advancement. This change was also consistent with the Congressional policy that services and resources serve those target groups that have the most severe deficits in the skills required for successful job placement.

The Act allows for a wide range of activities that combine occupational and educational components to be offered by community based organizations as well as the established school systems and postsecondary institutions. The legislation further requires that education programs for youth and programs offering academic credit or certifying educational attainment be consistent with applicable State and local standards. As a consequence of these requirements there are numerous JTPA programs operated outside of the traditional school setting that are potentially comparable with programs offered by the schools. Unlike school based programs, however, these nontraditional programs generally do not result in secondary or postsecondary credit although they may be comparable.

This guide is designed to meet the needs of local practitioners for information about the many avenues available to youth and adults to earn credit for competencies gained in a number of training, educational and work experience programs. Businesses, Private Industry Councils, Service Delivery Areas, employment and training officials, human service counselors, and educators should find the Guide helpful in designing programs that can provide credit leading toward a high school diploma or a college degree.

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POLICY BACKGROUND

Research has documented that the benefits of education are directly associated with the official certification of the achievement, usually in the form of a certificate or similar equivalent documentation. The high school diploma and the various postsecondary degrees, in particular, have proved to be accurate indicators of later success in life. It is therefore in the interests of both individuals and society to not only get people involved in education, but also to make sure that they are recognized for having done so.

Among the many reasons for encouraging more official recognition of educational achievement, changing demographics of the labor force could perhaps be the most significant. By the year 2000, the ratio of young adults to older adults(relative cohort size of young workers to old workers) will fall by nearly 40%. In fact, it has been estimated that 70% of the workforce needed in 2000 is currently working. This means that the labor force is aging at an unprecedented rate and, according to the turnover ratio, the absolute number of workers will decrease, resulting in a probable worker shortage. When considered with a recent U.S. Department of Labor estimate that current workers will have to be retrained at least 6 - 10 times during their careers, it is certain that there is going to be a significant volume of demand on educational institutions for training already working workers.

The demographic data also indicate important qualitative differences in the composition of the future labor force and, similarly, the corresponding nature of the demand on the education system. The most significant projection in this regard is that women and minorities will constitute approximately 70% of the labor force in the next decade. Unfortunately, these groups are two of the most traditionally underrepresented in the formal education system. This discrepancy represents a serious problem at a time when it is expected that 3 out of 4 newly created jobs will require at least a high school diploma. The result will be a severe mismatch between the supply and quality of the labor force with the increasing educational requirements of the new economy.

Business and industry will therefore be faced with an aggregate labor shortage and with employees who will probably require substantial remediation and training. The present formal education system has had structural difficulties in addressing many of these issues. As a result, alternative systems of training have evolved outside of the traditional education system, most notably the employment and training system. Even in this alternative system, however, there has been the explicit attempt for nontraditional training to be made equivalent with formal education. The attempt for equivalency and coordination

was evident in the conception of the Manpower Demonstration Act (MDTA) in 1962 and increased through the implementation of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program in the 1970's and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) in the 1980's.

Throughout this development of a consistent employment and training policy, there has been a persistent, but unsuccessful, attempt to certify educational attainment and accomplishment. This effort has become more pronounced under recent revisions of the JTPA that require specific educational activities and the documentation of employment "competencies", which are attempts to measure and certify genuine educational attainment. Similar strategies are also apparent in recent Federal and State welfare reform proposals where job training and education have become the primary objective. All of these efforts, in short, underline the importance of quality educational accomplishment both to employers and to the self-sufficiency of individuals.

The formal education system has also recognized the urgency and importance of nontraditional learning. It has established important and effective precedents based on documented research that learning does effectively occur outside of formal educational structures and settings. Following World War II, the Regents adopted, and have continuously endorsed, the high school equivalency program and diploma. Other more recent Regents initiatives have included the External Diploma Program (1980), the Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (1974), and the Regents External Degree (1970). On an institutional basis, alternative high school programs have evolved successfully and virtually every postsecondary institutions has explored since the 1960's different methods of awarding credit for experiential and self-initiated learning. Empire State College is an example of a postsecondary school that is based exclusively on a nontraditional curriculum. Department staff and local education institutions have encouraged these efforts by working more closely with schools, social service agencies, and employment and training programs in providing technical assistance and research on alternative assessment instruments, tests, and curricula.

Clearly, there is need to build on these efforts that have been made by both educators and non-educators to satisfy simultaneously the needs of the economy as well as the individual employment and social needs of persons requiring educational services. The Guide to the Award of High School and Postsecondary Credit for Experiential Learning under the Job Training Partnership Act represents an important step in this direction. It will enhance the effective collaborative linkages that have been forged among high schools, community based organizations, colleges, alternative educational institutions, and the private sector. School administrators, employment and training coordinators, social workers, and employers will find this to be a valuable document for acknowledging the educational

achievements of learners and improving their ability to contribute to society and themselves. Perhaps most important, this Guide will ensure that these nontraditional programs are of the highest quality, enabling practitioners to have practical and meaningful guidelines and standards in their educational programs.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

This Guide to the Award of High School and Postsecondary Credit for Experiential Learning Under the Job Training Partnership Act is intended to be used by:

- Educational institutions considering awarding credit or credentials for nontraditional educational experiences or considering developing programs involving nontraditional educational experiences.
- Noncredential-granting institutions operating educational programs, which are seeking to obtain credit or credentials for their students by having their programs recognized as credit-worthy by credential-granting educational institutions.
- Individuals seeking credit or credentials at the secondary- or postsecondary-school levels for nontraditional educational experiences.

With the above-mentioned users in mind, the guide was prepared for the following purposes:

- To identify alternatives to the traditional school or college program for earning credit or credentials at the secondary- and postsecondary-school levels, and provide contacts for further information.
- To present policy of the New York State Board of Regents on the award of credit and credentials for nontraditional educational experiences.
- To describe the benefits of nontraditional educational experiences to students, educational institutions and communities.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Throughout this guide, many terms appear which have specific meanings as used in the guide. These definitions are essential to understanding the policy and procedures that are presented. The following are key terms and concepts used in this guide:

Career exploration is student-initiated, goal-oriented career education which may occur both in the classroom and in the community.

Community based organizations are private, nonprofit organizations which are representative of communities or significant segments of communities and which provide employment and training services (for example, neighborhood groups and organizations, community action agencies, community development corporations, vocational rehabilitation organizations, agencies serving youth, union-related organizations, and employer-related nonprofit organization).

Credential-granting institutions refers to secondary and postsecondary educational institutions which are legally authorized to grant educational diplomas or degrees. In general, credential-granting institutions include public and private secondary schools, public and independent colleges and universities, registered private business schools, and hospital schools of nursing and other health-related programs which offer registered certificate programs. Educational institutions and credential-granting institutions will be used as synonyms in this guide.

Credentials are diplomas, certificates or degrees awarded for the completion of major programs of study approved by the Commissioner of Education and offered by an educational institution. (Diplomas are awarded for the completion of secondary-school programs, and degrees or certificates are awarded for the completion of postsecondary-school programs.)

Credit refers to units of award toward a diploma, certificate or degree granted by an educational institution. The term "credit" will be used in the guide to apply to both "units" earned at the secondary-school level pursuant to Section 100.1 and to "credit" earned at the postsecondary-school level as defined in Section 52.2(c)(3) of the Commissioner's Regulations.

Curriculum refers to the body of courses offered by an educational institution or a department thereof.

Experiential learning is learning which occurs as a result of direct hands-on or clinical experiences, such as working at a job, participating in field trips, and other experiences that further the attainment of individual educational goals.

Noncredential-granting institutions are those organizations that may provide educational programs and training activities, but are not legally authorized to grant credit or credentials and whose educational offerings are not a part of a curriculum approved by the Commissioner of Education.

Nontraditional educational programs are educational courses or programs of study that are not a part of the regular curriculum of a credential-granting educational institution or are not approved by the Commissioner for credit purposes. These programs may acknowledge learning resulting from work experience, job training, career exploration, life experience, library programs, or classroom instruction.

Nontraditional learning is learning that occurs as a result of experiences that are not a part of the regular curriculum of an educational institution.

Postsecondary schools are public and independent institutions of higher education including four-year colleges, two-year colleges, universities, professional and technical schools, and other institutions which are authorized to grant degrees and credentials.

Secondary schools are public and private educational institutions, that enroll students who are between the elementary and postsecondary levels, and which are authorized to grant diplomas for the completion of major programs of study.

Traditional learning is learning that occurs as a result of experiences that are a part of the regular curriculum of an educational institution.

BENEFITS OF THE RECOGNITION OF NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Credit and credentials are the awards for a student's learning or the recognition of a students educational progress toward and competence at a defined educational level. In the past, such awards were only possible for traditional learning experiences which occurred in educational institutions and in classroom and laboratory settings. However, educators now realize that nontraditional educational programs may enhance learning for a variety of different individuals in a variety of different settings. The knowledge or competencies and skills an individual obtains should be the basis of an award of credit or a credential rather than the method by which he or she learned. Today, many students are learning and earning credits and credentials through nontraditional educational experiences, and such opportunities are proving to be beneficial for the students, for the educational institutions which award credit and credentials, and for the communities in which the programs operate.

It is most important that students with handicapping conditions gain greater access to nontraditional educational experiences. These programs often provide alternative opportunities for students with handicapping conditions to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. However, in the past, these programs have not been used widely by students with handicapping conditions. It is necessary for persons who work with such students and plan their educational programs to be knowledgeable about the wide variety of options to which students with handicapping conditions have access. Careful planning for the involvement of students with handicapping conditions in these programs may provide them with greater opportunities for obtaining needed credit and/or credentials.

The most important benefit of awarding or earning credit and credentials through nontraditional educational experiences is the value of the learning which has taken place. Programs which provide for nontraditional educational experiences or those which enable students to earn credit for subject matter they have learned through nontraditional experiences can be viable means of learning academic subjects and work-related skills. Such programs can provide students with opportunities to learn in a different manner, which can either complement traditional programs or can provide an alternative way of obtaining an educational credential. For example, programs which provide students with opportunities to gain experience in work situations can help students to understand better the dimensions of a particular career in which they are interested, to learn specific job-related skills, and to be more employable when searching for a job. Such opportunities also serve to improve traditional

educational programs by providing experiences that will complement and build upon the subject matter or skills which are being taught in traditional programs.

Programs which enable people to obtain credentials in a nontraditional manner can provide individuals with opportunities to earn credentials when the traditional manner is inappropriate. These programs offer new opportunities to many people who would otherwise be cut off from career advancement or further educational opportunities because of the lack of a diploma or a degree. They not only benefit the individual student, but also strengthen the community and the educational system by providing alternative ways for individuals to become better educated and better prepared for future employment.

Educational institutions that award credit for learning through nontraditional experiences can help individuals to return to school to apply their earned credit toward a diploma or degree. For example, people who are employed by a business or industry that offers educational courses may begin to earn credit for some course work at their job site and be encouraged to return to a college or university to apply this credit toward a degree program. Educational institution can increase their enrollments by accepting such credit, as such students will be more likely to enroll in traditional educational programs at institutions which accept credit for the courses they have completed at the job site.

There may be broader benefits for educational institutions which award credit for learning obtained through nontraditional educational experiences. Many nontraditional educational programs offer ways for participants to earn income as well as learn new skills. Such programs may help schools reduce dropout rates by providing opportunities for students who are at risk of leaving school to enter programs where they can earn wages while, at the same time, learn about the relationship between their education and future employment opportunities, develop valuable skills, and earn credit toward a diploma. These programs can be particularly beneficial to communities which are experiencing high unemployment rates. Unemployed individuals will be attracted to opportunities to earn wages while learning new skills and earning credits toward a credential which may benefit their future employment prospects.

An educational system which provides alternative ways to earn credit and credentials benefits by offering more people opportunities to enter into and succeed in its system. Such a system is stronger when it acknowledges that all individuals cannot learn in the same manner, and when it devises ways to measure and reward learning that has taken place based on the level of competence obtained, rather than the manner in which it was obtained.

REGENTS POLICY

It is the policy of the New York State Board of Regents to acknowledge learning by all individuals regardless of where, or the method by which, that learning occurred. The Regents encourage the development of nontraditional educational programs that complement traditional programs and thereby strengthen the entire educational system by offering a rich array of choices to the learners of the State.

The Regents also support the efforts of educators to establish systems to assess nontraditional learning for the award of credit or credentials by local secondary and postsecondary educational institutions. The Regents Goals for Adult Learning Services emphasize appropriate assessment procedures for adult learning. The Regents recognize that the real outcomes of education should be knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and strengthened capacities --not merely credits and credentials. However, as a means of educational progress, job attainment or advancement, or personal satisfaction, the Regents encourage all individuals in the State to seek credit or credentials as documentation for their nontraditional learning experiences. Whether or not one is presently enrolled in a traditional secondary or postsecondary school, the Regents encourage progress toward the attainment of educational credentials by the largest possible number of youth and adults in the State.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS NONTRADITIONAL LEARNING

The Regents support the following types of nontraditional learning programs that complement traditional educational systems:

- Programs in credential-granting or other institutions that combine classroom instruction with work experience or career exploration;
- Courses offered by businesses, industry, libraries, community-based organizations, government agencies, the military, or similar organizations not traditionally authorized to grant educational credentials;
- Programs in postsecondary and secondary institutions that award credit for past work experience or life experience;

- Programs that assess academic preparedness and the mastery of competencies for the award of a high school diploma or college degree; and

- Testing programs that assess knowledge equivalent to the content of specific college courses or equivalent to the experience needed to meet specific diploma requirements.

WHO CAN PROVIDE NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Organizations that provide nontraditional educational programs for which students have been awarded credit or credentials by secondary and postsecondary institutions include: local boards of education; colleges and universities; the State Education Department; business, industry, community-based organizations, government agencies, the military, libraries, and similar organizations. Independent testing agencies such as the Educational Testing Service administer assessment systems which can be used to measure learning which may have been acquired in nontraditional ways.

Organizations which can provide nontraditional educational programs are not limited to the list mentioned above. However, the extent to which participation in such programs results in credits or credentials is limited by the acceptance of programs by educational institutions which have the authority to award credit or credentials.

WHO RECOGNIZES NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Educational institutions, which are under the supervision of the Board of Regents, are legally authorized to grant credit and credentials for instruction and study.[1] In general, educational institutions have the ultimate authority to approve credit for nontraditional types of experiences which will be applied toward the credential which that institution awards. Although educational institutions generally offer credentials based on approved or registered programs, such institutions do have flexibility to award credit for certain nontraditional experiences which enhance the traditional curriculum.[2] Local boards of education may not, however, award a local diploma based on the fact that a student has earned an equivalency diploma in a State program such as the GED testing program.

Nontraditional educational programs recommended for academic credit by the State Education Department or any other organization must be acceptable to a credential-granting institution in order for credit to be awarded. Only credential-granting institutions have the authority to award credit for such programs. This principle also applies to programs operated by testing groups whereby a student's level of knowledge about a subject or competence in an area is measured by a test and credit is recommended. The credit for passing such a test is awarded by a credential-granting institution and not the testing organization.

Education Law also authorizes the Board of Regents to grant diplomas and degrees for study and instruction that is both

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[1]Section 345 of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning the authority of secondary schools to confer diplomas; and Section 3.46 of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning the authority of postsecondary schools to confer degrees.

[2]Section 52.2(c)(4)(ii) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning the conditions under which semester hours may be granted for fewer hours of instruction and study than those specified in regulations for postsecondary schools; and Sections 100.2(h) and 100.5(d) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning curriculum adaptations and experimentation by boards of education.

traditional and nontraditional in nature.[3] The Regents currently offer two nontraditional methods of earning a high school diploma through the High School Equivalency Program. At the postsecondary-school level the Regents offer degrees for nontraditional experiences through the Regents External Degree Program.

WHO CAN ASSESS NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR CREDIT OR CREDENTIALS

The Board of Regents has the authority to confer diplomas, certificates and degrees to individuals who meet the stated requirements.[4] This authority is used to award credentials for nontraditional educational experiences in the High School Equivalency Program and the Regents External Degree Program. The Regents also offer a testing program whereby students may test knowledge learned through nontraditional ways and earn credit. Otherwise it is the responsibility of each educational institution to assess the nontraditional educational experiences for which it wishes to award credit. Institutions grant credit for experiences that meet the requirements of its curriculum. In cases where the learning is not part of its curriculum, the institution must consider how the experience fits its goals and the student's educational program, how many hours the student spent on the experience, and the quality of the student's experiences.

The State Education Department assesses nontraditional educational experiences as a service to educational institutions. Examples of this service include: the assessment of noncollegiate educational programs for recommendation for college credit; the assessment of a nonschool-based career exploration program resulting in recommendations to award credit at the secondary-school level; and the review of noncredit curricula for approval for the training of veterans.

Services provided by the State Education Department to assess nontraditional educational programs lead to recommendations to local educational institutions to award specific amounts and kinds of credit. Local educational

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[3]Education Law Sections 208 and 209 concerning the Regents authority to confer credentials and degrees.

[4]Education Law Sections 208 and 209 concerning the Regents authority to confer credentials and degrees.

institutions may accept, reject, or modify the credit recommendation.

The Educational Testing Service administers systems for the assessment of nontraditional educational experiences through the College Boards, College-Level, Examination Program and the Graduate Record Examination Boards Advanced Testing Program. Any person or organization may provide such a service and may influence whether or not an educational institution awards credit for the experiences evaluated, provided they are recognized for their assessment procedures and educational standards. In every case, however, the service results in a credit recommendation and the local educational institution has the right to accept or reject that recommendation.

WHO CAN ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD OF CREDIT AND CREDENTIALS AND FOR WHAT PURPOSES SHOULD THEY BE USED

Criteria for the award of credit and credentials serve as educational standards that define the amount and level of learning that has occurred. Such criteria are useful to operators of nontraditional educational programs to define the educational standards of the program, to communicate to students expectations concerning their performance, and to coordinate with local educational institutions in order to obtain credit awards for the program's students.

The Regulations of the Commissioner of Education define postsecondary credit and establish criteria for awarding such credit for undergraduate as well as graduate degrees.[5] The regulations also provide criteria for the number of hours of instruction necessary to earn a semester hour of credit: at least 15 hours (of 50 minutes each) of instruction and at least 30 hours of supplementary assignments for one semester hour of credit.[6] The regulations also allow credit to be granted for fewer hours of instruction if it has been approved by the Commissioner through the registration process, or when the Commissioner has granted prior approval to the institution to maintain a statement of academic standards that defines

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[5]Section 52.2(c)(3) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning credit for undergraduate and graduate degrees.

[6]Section 50.1(o) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning the definition of "semester hour."

equivalency of instruction and study.[7] The regulations require postsecondary institutions to assure that credit is granted only to students who have achieved the stated objectives of each credit-bearing activity.[8]

At the secondary level the Commissioner's Regulations define a unit of credit as "the mastery of specific learning outcomes following completion of at least 180 minutes per week throughout a school year, or in special circumstances passing a Department approved exam in a specific subject. The regulations require that the minimum length of a period be 40 minutes, not including the time used to change classes or teachers.[9] The regulations allow a secondary school to make curriculum adaptations which are necessary to meet local needs and to conduct experimentation as may be approved by the Commissioner.[10]

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[7]Section 52.2(c)(4)(ii) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning the conditions under which semester hours may be granted for fewer hours of instruction and study than those specified in regulations for postsecondary schools.

[8]Section 52.2(c)(5) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning the granting of credit.

[9]Section 100.1(b) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning the definition of the term "unit of credit" and Section 100.5 on requirements for graduation.

[10]Sections 100.2(n) and 100.5(d) of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York concerning curriculum adaptations and experimentation by boards of education.

SECONDARY LEVEL NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT RESULT IN CREDIT OR CREDENTIALS

Scope of Programs

In New York State, students have many opportunities to earn credit and credentials at the secondary-school level for nontraditional educational experiences. Nontraditional educational programs at the secondary-school level are generally of three types:

Programs that combine classroom instruction and work experience. Such programs provide students with opportunities to have paid work experiences while at the same time earning credit. The programs described in the guide -- the Cooperative Occupational Education Program, the General Work Experience Program, the Work Experience and Career Exploration Program, and the School-To-Employment Program -- are all operated by secondary schools. However, it is possible that such programs could also be offered by community-based organizations or other State agencies.

Programs that combine classroom instruction and career exploration. Career exploration is different from work experience in that the student is not actually working at a job but instead participating in activities to learn about a given job or jobs, such as field trips, shadowing a person performing a job, interviewing a person in a given job, or conducting research on a specific career. Career exploration is like work experience in that it is conducted away from the classroom, in the "world of work." The Adolescent Vocational Exploration Program, described in the guide, is operated by community-based organizations and county employment and training offices, but such a program might also be offered by local education agencies or other community or State agencies.

Programs that assess academic preparedness and the mastery of competencies for the award of a high school diploma. Such programs allow students to earn a high school diploma outside of the traditional school setting, generally through overall evaluation of their competencies and specific testing. They and the High School Equivalency Program are operated by local boards of education and by the State Education Department respectively, both of which have the authority to award high school diplomas.

Adolescent Vocational Exploration Program (AVE)

Program description: A career exploration program that combines classroom instruction on career education with career exploration using resources in the community.

Eligibility: 14 to 17 year old primarily in-school youth.

Program operators: Community-based organizations or county employment and training offices.

Length of program: Eight weeks (192 instructional hours) during the summer and three months during the fall (after school and Saturdays).

Program objective: To help young people define and clarify their career and educational goals and thereby enhance their opportunities for future employment.

Program activity: The summer component integrates twelve hours per week of classroom instruction on career skills, life skills and basic skills with twelve hours per week of community resource exploration in which students gather information concerning their career and educational goals. Examples of community explorations include field trips, interviewing members of the community, job shadowing and library research. Students are expected to complete a planned project about a job or career they have investigated. Students are paid a stipend for their time spent in the summer component. The fall component focuses on remediation activities, continued vocational explorations in the community and the application of career, life and basic skills to career and educational goals.

Credit: The Department accredits AVE programs and recommends one unit of elective credit at the secondary-school level be awarded by participants' schools for successful completion of the summer component. No credit is recommended for the fall component.

Source of official student records: In general, student records are available from the executive director's office of the community organization operating the program.

Contact for further information:

Bureau of Occupational and Continuing Education
Program Support
Room 1613, One Commerce Plaza
New York State Education Department
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-3973

Cooperative Occupational Education Program

Program description: A school-operated program that combines supervised work experience in one of six occupational fields and related classroom instruction in the chosen occupation.

Eligibility: Secondary-school students who may be legally employed according to the Laws Governing the Employment of Minors in New York State, published by the Department of Labor, and who have definite occupational objectives in the fields in which training stations are available: Agriculture, Business and Marketing, Home Economics, Trade, or Diversified occupations.

Program operators: A secondary school with a registered Cooperative Occupational Education Program.

Length of program: Two to four academic years.

Program objective: To provide opportunities for students to learn occupational skills as a result of on-the-job training and related classroom/laboratory instruction.

Program activity: The student receives classroom instruction provided by a teacher certified to teach the occupational subject in question. Instruction is designed to develop skills, to increase technical knowledge, and to provide general information related to success on the job. An occupational education teacher or a certified coordinator develops a training plan with the student and employer concerning the competencies to be acquired by the student. When the student is oriented, the coordinator places the student at a training station. The student becomes a paid worker who receives instruction in the performance of a job by an employer during the usual hours of the occupation.

Assessment procedures: Supervision and evaluation procedures are agreed upon by the student, teacher-coordinator, and training supervisor. The coordinator is responsible for seeing that procedures for periodic evaluation are included in the training plan and are followed by the student, teacher, and training supervisor. All cooperative occupational education programs in New York State must be approved by the New York State Education Department.

Credit: In most cooperative occupational education programs students may earn one unit of Regents credit for each 300 hours of on-the-job supervised experience. Two units of Regents credit, however, are the maximum allowable graduation credits that may be earned for the work experience regardless of the hours accumulated or years

spent in the program. One to two units of credit are applicable to select sequences in occupational education subjects as well as to a five unit interdisciplinary Cooperative Education sequence.

Source of official student records: Generally, student records are available from the principal of the secondary school operating the program.

Contact for further information:

Division of Occupational Education Programs
Room 1623, One Commerce Plaza
99 Washington Avenue
New York State Education Department
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-0149

External High School Diploma Program

Program description: A program that awards a high school diploma for candidates who demonstrate defined educational, occupational, or other competencies.

Eligibility: Any out-of-school person who is 21 years old or older. (Additional age restrictions may be required by local boards of education.)

Program operators: Regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, adult education centers, or schools in conjunction with a local board of education.

Length of program: The length of the program varies for each participant depending on the type and amount of assessment required and whether additional learning must occur.

Program objective: To award competent adults with a local high school diploma upon demonstration of required competencies, regardless of how they were acquired.

Program activity: Each diploma candidate must show general educational competencies, and meet the requirements of one of three options available to show individualized competencies. All participants must show general competency in reading, mathematics, consumer education, science, citizenship, health awareness and occupational preparedness. Candidates must also show any one of three groups of individualized competencies, in recognition of special skills that adults may develop: occupational or vocational skills, advanced academic and college readiness skills, or specialized competency in a specific area, such as music, art or community service. Candidates may also participate in periods of independent study to acquire skills that the program's assessment indicates are not satisfactorily mastered.

Assessment Procedures: Evaluation of prior experience requires a diploma candidate to demonstrate accomplishment of required competencies regardless of where, when, or how they were acquired. The candidate seeking to enter an External High School Diploma program undergoes an initial assessment process beginning with extensive counseling regarding the program and the alternatives open to the individual. This is followed by diagnostic testing and, if necessary, subsequent periods of independent study using available learning resources in the community. The candidate is then reassessed and required to demonstrate the competencies necessary to achieve the External High School Diploma. Upon satisfactory demonstration of the competencies, the

candidate's accumulated assessment folders are evaluated and presented to a local board of education for final approval and awarding of the local high school diploma. Although the diploma must be awarded by a local board of education, assessment may be conducted by personnel at various sites such as regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and adult education centers or schools.

Prior work experience is assessed by having the candidate present written employer verification of a successful year's employment in related job settings, provide proof of a current New York State occupational license, or demonstrate skills through a performance interview conducted by a master craftsman. The master craftsman, employed in the field selected by the candidate, establishes the criteria for assessing the work experience and may supervise the candidate's on-the-job performance where applicable.

Some competencies in the External High School Diploma Program are not directly connected with job skills but instead reflect accomplishment of academic or specialized skills. These competencies can be assessed by scores from standardized or college-developed tests, or by the judgments of experts in such fields as art and music.

Credit: Credit toward the high school diploma is measured in competencies mastered. When candidates have demonstrated all of the generalized competencies and one of the three options for individualized competencies, they are considered to have credit equivalent to a high school program and are awarded a high school diploma.

Source of official student records: Local boards of education maintain official student records, usually in the local school district office.

Contact for further information:

Bureau of Adult and Continuing Education
Program Development
New York State Education Department
Room 1607, Twin Towers Building
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-8700

General Work Experience

(16-21 Year Olds)

Program description: A school-operated program that combines work experience and classroom instruction on career education for in-school youth 16 to 21 years of age.

Eligibility: Sixteen to 21 year old youth attending a registered high school, who are not enrolled in an occupational program and are legally employed as described in the New York State Department of Labor publication, Laws Governing the Employment of Minors in New York State.

Program operators: Local school districts with registered high schools who receive State Education Department approval to run a General Work Experience Program.

Length of program: One academic year.

Program objective: To help prepare youth for the world of work by strengthening their occupational and employability skills through a program of work experience and related instruction.

Program activity: Students must work at least 300 hours in a supervised job setting during the school year and complete one 40-minute class per week of instruction related to the job experience, such as instruction on basic skills, employability skills, group counseling, or other topics relevant to the job experience. Students may take an additional 40-minute class related to the job site experience either every day of the school year or half of the days of the school year.

Assessment procedures: A certified teacher or guidance counselor supervises the program, develops a progressive learning program with the student, and maintains records on the number of hours worked, and the number of hours spent in related classroom instruction. Students must also obtain completed evaluation reports from their employer concerning their job performance.

Credit: One credit is earned for working at least 300 hours during the school year and one credit is earned for the weekly class of related instruction. Additional credit may be earned for completing a daily class of instruction related to the job experience either half the days of the school year (for one-half credit) or every day of the school year (for one credit).

Source of official student records: Student records, including placement, follow-up, reference and credit, are maintained in the local school district office.

Contact for further information:

Bureau of School Registration
New York State Education Department
Room 663, Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-5923

High School Equivalency Through Postsecondary Credit

Program description: A program that awards a high school equivalency diploma for the completion of 24 credits as a recognized candidate for a college-level degree or certificate.

Eligibility: Persons over 19 years of age, or 17 to 19 years of age and either out of school for one year or members of a high school class that has graduated.

Program operators: The State Education Department.

Length of program: This varies for each candidate depending on whether course work or proficiency examinations are used to meet the credit requirements.

Program objective: To enable persons who have not graduated from high school to demonstrate the attainment of abilities normally acquired in a high school program of study by completing 24 credits as a recognized candidate for a college-level degree or certificate.

Program activity: The high school equivalency diploma candidate under this option must complete 24 credits as a recognized candidate for a college-level degree or certificate at an approved institution. These credits may be earned by completing courses or passing proficiency examinations (see section on the College Proficiency Examination Program). After completing the 24 credits, the candidate must apply to the State Education Department to receive the high school equivalency diploma.

Assessment procedures: The State Education Department processes the candidate's application which requires the postsecondary institution to certify that 24 credits have been earned by the student as a recognized candidate for a college-level degree or certificate.

Credit: The Board of Regents awards high school equivalency diplomas to individuals who have completed 24 credits as a recognized candidate for a college-level degree or certificate.

Source of official student records and contact for further information:

High School Equivalency Testing Program
New York State Education Department
Room 771, Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-6169

High School Equivalency Through the Tests of General Educational Development

Program description: A testing program that results in the award of a high school equivalency diploma for successful performance.

Eligibility: Persons over 19 years of age, or 17 to 19 years of age and either out of school for one year or members of a high school class that has graduated. Candidates must live in the State for at least one month before the examination date.

Program operators: The State Education Department offers the Tests of General Educational Development (GED) at approximately 75 testing centers and on dates announced by the State Education Department.

Program activity: The GED consists of five multiple-choice tests on writing skills, social studies, science, reading skills and mathematics. The number of items on each test varies from 40 to 80; the total time limit for the five tests is 6 3/4 hours. Instructional programs in GED preparation offer courses in the academic subjects assessed by the tests.

Assessment procedures: The New York State standard for successful performance on the GED requires scaled scores of 35 or more on each subtest and 225 or more on the total test. Candidates may retake the GED as many times as is required to pass the State standard, and may take the tests in English, Spanish and French.

Credit: Candidates who meet the State standard for the GED receive a high school equivalency diploma.

Source of official student records and contact for further information:

High School Equivalency Testing Program
New York State Education Department
Room 771, Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-6169

School to Employment Program

Program description: A school-operated program combining work experience and classroom instruction.

Eligibility: In-school youth, 15 years of age or older at risk of dropping out of school.

Program operators: Secondary schools.

Length of program: One academic year full time.

Program objective: To improve students' self-concepts and attitudes toward school and work to enable them to complete high school and perform successfully as full time employees after graduation.

Program activity: Students participate in one half day of classes, usually in the morning, and one half day of work experience, supervised and coordinated by a certified teacher. Students attend classes appropriate to their ability, needs, and interest, including a work-orientation class. Students may be placed with three types of employers and paid a stipend or wage: private firms, boards of education, and noneducational public agencies.

Assessment procedures: The teacher coordinator assesses students' performance to ensure that they complete at least three hours of work and one work orientation session per day throughout the academic year.

Credit: One unit of credit is awarded for completion of the work-orientation class and the related work experience. Additional credits may be earned by completion of the other classes in which students are enrolled during their half day of classes.

Source of official student records: Generally, student records are available from the principal of the secondary school operating the program.

Contact for further information:

Division of Child Development,
Parent Education and Pupil Support Services
New York State Education Department
Room 973, Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-5807

Work Experience And Career Exploration

(14-15 Year Olds)

Program description: A school-operated program that combines work experience and classroom instruction on career education for youth who are 14 and 15 years old.

Eligibility: Fourteen and 15 year old youth attending a registered high school, who are not enrolled in an occupational program and are legally employed as described in the New York State Department of Labor publication, Laws Governing the Employment of Minors in New York State.

Program operators: Local school districts with registered high schools who have received State Education Department approval for this program.

Length of program: One academic year.

Program objective: To help prepare youth for the world of work by strengthening their educational process and employability through a program of work experience and related instruction.

Program activity: Students must work at least 300 hours in a supervised job setting during the school year and complete one 40-minute class per week of instruction related to the job experience, such as instruction on basic skills, employability skills, group counseling, or other topics relevant to the job experience. Students may take an additional 40-minute class related to the job site experience either every day of the school year or half of the days of the school year.

Assessment procedures: A certified teacher or guidance counselor supervises the program, develops a written, progressive learning program with the student, and maintains records on the number of hours worked, and the number of hours spent in related classroom instruction. Students must also obtain completed evaluation reports from their employer concerning their job performance.

Credit: One credit is earned for working at least 300 hours during the school year and one credit is earned for the weekly class of related instruction. Additional credit may be earned for completing a daily class of instruction related to the job experience either half the days of the school year (for one-half credit) or every day of the school year (for one credit).

Source of official student records: Records of enrolled students' names, addresses and placement location and job are kept by the State Education Department.

Contact for further information:

Bureau of School Registration
New York State Education
Room 663
Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-5923

POSTSECONDARY-LEVEL NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT RESULT IN CREDIT OR CREDENTIALS

Scope of Programs

New York State offers students many opportunities to earn credit and credentials at the postsecondary-school level for nontraditional educational experiences. Generally, the nontraditional educational programs which currently are available can be described as one of three general types:

Programs that combine classroom instruction with work experiences. Such programs give students opportunities to have work experiences which are directly related to their academic studies and their career interests. Work experience programs also allow students to earn credit and may provide opportunities for students to earn income. The Guide describes Cooperative Education Programs offered by community colleges and postsecondary programs that offer award for work experience. These programs are operated by postsecondary educational institutions in conjunction with employers.

Programs which assess course offerings by nondegree-granting institutions. Many nondegree-granting institutions, such as businesses, industry, governmental agencies and the military, offer courses which help train or provide further education for their employees. Certain programs provide assessment of such courses which helps students to obtain credit at postsecondary institutions. The guide describes the Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction and the Military Service Schools and Occupational Specialties Program which are designed to assess courses offered by nondegree-granting institutions for college-level credit recommendation.

Testing or assessment programs that evaluate knowledge for equivalence to the content in specific college courses or to specific degree requirements. There are many programs available which test or assess students for prior knowledge. Such programs provide opportunities for students to receive credit based on the knowledge they have gained and the skills they have obtained from nontraditional educational experiences. The guide describes the College Proficiency Examination Program, Advanced Placement Program of the College Board, the Graduate Record Examination Advanced Tests, the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, the Regents External Degree Program and programs offered by postsecondary institutions. These programs are administered by The University of the State of New York, the

New York State Education Department, the College Entrance Examination Board, the Educational Testing Service, the military, or by individual postsecondary institutions.

Advanced Placement (AP) Program of the College Board

Program description: The advanced placement program offers subject area examinations which enable secondary school students to earn credits toward associate and bachelor degrees.

Eligibility: Open. However, students generally are selected by their secondary schools to enroll in special college-level courses during their senior year to prepare for the examinations.

Program operator: College Entrance Examination Board.

Length of program: AP examinations are administered in May of each year. The length of each test varies with the subject matter tested.

Program objective: To give secondary-school students opportunities to demonstrate college-level achievement.

Program activity: Generally, secondary schools set up advanced placement courses or arrange for students to prepare for the examinations through independent study or tutoring. Students apply to the College Board to take the examinations which are offered in thirteen different subject areas. Examination results are transmitted by the College Board to the students' postsecondary institution.

Assessment procedures: The College Board is responsible for developing the examinations and scoring the results.

Applications: Available from the College Board and many high schools.

Credit: Students can earn credits toward associate and bachelor degrees depending on the policy of the postsecondary institution in which they enroll. Some colleges or universities set a limit to the number of credits which can be earned through AP examination. Others will use AP results to waive prerequisite requirements for upper level courses. Most require a grade of at least 3 (out of 5) for credit or waivers.

Students can receive credit toward a Regents External Degree by earning a minimum score of 3 on each AP examination.

Contact for further information:

College Board Publications Orders
Advanced Placement Examinations
P.O. Box 2815
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
(609) 771-7419

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Program description: CLEP is a testing program administered by the College Entrance Examination Board. Successful completion of a CLEP test can result in postsecondary school credit.

Eligibility: Open.

Program operator: The College Entrance Examination Board.

Length of program: The College Board offers CLEP tests nationally several times each year. The length of the tests vary depending on the subject matter tested.

Program objective: CLEP provides opportunities for students to receive credit based on a student's prior achievement or knowledge of a subject matter.

Program activity: Students apply to the College Board to take a CLEP examination. The tests are available as both general and subject examinations. General examinations include five basic areas of liberal arts; English Composition, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. The subject examinations cover specific areas of achievement. The College Board sends official results of the tests to the student and to the institutions he or she requests.

Assessment procedures: The College Board is responsible for developing the examinations and scoring the results.

Applications: Applications are available from the College-Level Examination Program.

Credit: Credit from each general and subject examination is awarded for either one semester or a full year course of study. Credits can be applied toward various associate or bachelor degrees and can satisfy many of the requirements for earning a Regents External Degree. Postsecondary institutions vary on the degree to which they will accept the examinations for credit. Students intending to take a CLEP test should understand the policy of the institution in which they are enrolled or where they plan to attend.

Contact for further information: College-Level Examination Program
P.O. Box 1822
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
(609) 734-3843

The College Proficiency Examination Program (CPEP)

Program description: The New York State College Proficiency Examination Program is a postsecondary testing program offering examinations in a wide variety of subjects.

Eligibility: Open.

Program operator: New York State Education Department.

Length of program: Most College Proficiency Examinations are administered six times a year in New York State and in other states. The length of individual tests vary, but most can be completed in a few hours.

Program objective: To permit the many people who acquire college-level knowledge and abilities through nontraditional experiences, such as job experiences, courses taken in the military or independent study, to earn college credit for this knowledge.

Program activity: The College Proficiency Examinations test knowledge which is equivalent to the content of one or more semester courses in that subject on a college campus. Over twenty subjects are covered by the examinations including the arts, the sciences, education, nursing, criminal justice, and secretarial sciences. People take College Proficiency Examinations for many reasons including job advancement, course prerequisite waivers, salary credits, self evaluation, employment qualifications, college credit or teacher certification requirements.

Assessment procedures: The College Proficiency Examination Program employs faculty members from New York State colleges and universities who serve as consultants to develop the examinations. The consultants also help determine the level of performance needed to achieve a satisfactory grade by administering tests to college students enrolled in traditional courses covering comparable materials. The examinations are designed to test individuals' factual knowledge and their ability to use it effectively.

Formats for the examinations vary and may include multiple-choice, short-answer and essay sections. The examinations are graded on a letter grade, standard scores or pass-fail basis.

Applications: Applications are available from the program office or at many libraries and postsecondary institutions. The Department's Office of Independent Study and Program Development has available content outlines and study guides to help individuals prepare for examinations.

Credit: Each examination carries a certain recommendation for credit award. Most postsecondary institutions accept the examinations for credit, but their policies vary so students intending to take an examination should understand their schools policy on the examinations prior to taking them.

Contact for further information:

Office of Independent Study
and Programs Development
New York State Education
Department
Room 5D45,
Cultural Education Center
Albany, New York 12230
(518) 474-3703

Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

Program description: DANTES is a comprehensive educational testing and support program offered at military installations throughout the world.

Eligibility: Military personnel on active duty or reservists on active duty for 120 consecutive days or more.

Program operator: Department of Defense.

Program objective: To support the voluntary education programs of the military services by:

(1) providing a wide range of examination and certification programs;
(2) operating a support system for military personnel pursuing independent study programs;
(3) serving as the program manager for Department of Defense education contracts with testing and other education programs;
(4) operating an examination score recording and reporting system, including transcript services; and
(5) providing other support and developmental activities.

Program activity: DANTES provides nontraditional educational opportunities for military personnel throughout the world through examination programs, independent study programs, educational publications, and other support and developmental activities.

DANTES administers and sponsors examination programs at over 840 testing stations throughout the world, and pays for the examination and course fees for military personnel. These examination programs provide opportunities for gaining college admission, obtaining academic credit and professional certification, and obtaining high school equivalency diplomas. The testing programs available through DANTES include: the General Education Development Test (GED), the California High School Proficiency Examination, the America College Testing (ACT) Assessment Examinations (GRE), the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the ACT Proficiency Examination Program (ACT/PEP).

DANTES also offers its own series of examinations, the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs), in vocational-technical and traditional academic subject matter areas. DANTES also provides opportunities for military personnel to participate in professional certification examinations.

DANTES publishes a DANTES Independent Study Catalog which provides military personnel with information on ways they may participate in some 7,000 independent study courses offered by 56 regionally accredited colleges and universities. Military personnel can apply to such programs through a DANTES application form.

DANTES provides information to military personnel on nontraditional educational programs through a series of education publications.

DANTES also manages the Servicemembers Opportunities Colleges (SOC) Program and the Military Service Schools and Occupational Specialties credit recommendation program (described in a separate section in the guide). The SOC program is a network of over 400 colleges and universities which have adopted special policies and programs to help military personnel earn credit and degrees.

Assessment procedures: Assessment of DSSTs is provided by DANTES. The contractors of the other testing programs, independent study courses and other DANTES opportunities are responsible for assessing the examinations or courses. DANTES coordinates the transcript and recordkeeping activities for students.

Applications: Available to active duty personnel from the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard through the local installation Education Office and to active duty Navy personnel through the local Navy Campus Office.

Credit: Students can receive credit at postsecondary institutions from DANTES examinations and other programs to apply toward bachelor and associate degrees. However, the award of credit for DANTES activities depends on the policy of the institution in which the student enrolls.

Contact for further information: DANTES
Pensacola, Florida 32509
(904) 452-1732

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Advanced Tests

Program description: Graduate Record Examination Advanced Tests are graduate school entrance examinations in specific subject areas.

Eligibility: Open. However, generally taken by individuals who have completed bachelor's degrees or are in their fourth year of undergraduate study.

Program operator: Educational Testing Service.

Length of program: GRE Advanced Tests are administered nationally and in some foreign locations five times each year. Each examination is approximately three hours in length.

Program objective: To measure a candidate's comprehension of material basic to graduate study in major fields.

Program activity: Students apply to Educational Testing Service to be admitted to the examination. The tests are offered in twenty subject areas. However, only six are administered in New York State. The other fourteen may be taken in nearby states. Educational Testing Services sends test results to the student and to any institutions which the student requests.

Assessment procedures: Educational Testing Service is responsible for developing the examinations and scoring the results.

Applications: Available from Educational Testing Service

Credit: Students can receive undergraduate credit toward a Regents External Degree by scoring approximately at the 33rd percentile. Cut-off scores for particular examinations, which may vary from year to year because of norming group changes, are available from the Regents External Degree Office. Students can earn 39 credit hours per test toward the Regents External Degree.

Contact for further information:

Graduate Record Examination
Educational Testing Service
Box 955
Princeton, New Jersey 08541
(609) 771-7670

Military Service Schools and Occupational Specialties

Program description: A program for military personnel which evaluates and recommends for credit military service school courses and achievements gained through military occupational specialties.

Eligibility: Military personnel.

Program operator: American Council on Education (ACE).

Program objective: To provide opportunities for military personnel to earn credit for courses offered by the military and for skills and achievements mastered in various occupational specialties.

Program activity: The American Council on Education makes ongoing evaluations of military service school courses and of accomplishments required in various military occupational specialties. ACE publishes its evaluations in the Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services. Copies of the Guide are available at most colleges and universities, Veterans Administration Offices and Base Education Centers. Students have official documentation forwarded to the institutions in which they enroll. Institutions use the ACE Guide for official credit recommendations.

Assessment procedures: The American Council on Education is responsible for evaluating the courses and accomplishments. ACE arranges to have three faculty members from civilian colleges visit the military program to determine whether the content in a military course is equivalent to the content in a civilian course on the same subject matter. ACE uses a similar method to evaluate the skills and achievements required in various occupational specialties. The evaluators determine whether the achievements which are required of a specific occupational specialty are equivalent to the skills a student would learn in a course at a civilian college.

Credit: Students can receive credit toward associate and bachelors degrees based on the credit recommendation by ACE. The amount of credit granted is dependent on the policy of the individual college or university.

Contact for further information: Office on Educational Credit and Credentials
American Council on Education
1 Dupont Circle
Washington, D.C. 20038
(202) 833-4770

Postsecondary Cooperative Education

Program description: Postsecondary Cooperative Education Programs are paid work experience programs whereby students gain experience actually working on a job of career interest and, simultaneously, receive classroom instruction.

Eligibility: Determined by program operators.

Program operators: Colleges and universities.

Length of program: Variable.

Program objective: (1) To enhance a student's educational experiences and/or to provide occupational training and;

(2) To explore careers and/or prepare for specific jobs.

Program activity: Cooperative education provides students with an integrated program of paid work experience and classroom instruction. The student is employed as a regular employee performing all the tasks required by that job. Students are generally employed in work settings with the area of their career choice.

Assessment procedures: The program coordinator, employers, and faculty cooperate to develop a formula or model for assessing the cooperative education experience for credit. Such a formula generally addresses the following factors:

- Type and quality of the work experience.
- Relevance of the work experience to the student's degree program.
- Number of hours the student works per week.
- Level of coordination between the institution and the employer.

The college's faculty determine the competencies which are required for graduation. The program coordinators, employers and faculty connected with the program review the identified competencies to determine which can be learned at the work site and assign such competencies to the appropriate courses and work experience. Students are individually assessed by the program coordinator, their employer and their professors.

Credit: Credit is offered toward graduation or toward specific course requirements as determined by the program coordinator and faculty.

Contact for further information: Bureau of Grants Administration
New York State Education
Department
Room 5B68
Cultural Education Center
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12230
(518) 474-5705.

Postsecondary Programs That Credit Work and Life Experiences*

Program description: Various programs which give student opportunities to earn credit for work or life experiences.

Eligibility: Established by individual colleges and universities.

Program operators: Colleges and universities.

Length of program: Varies depending on the college or university program or evaluation.

Program objective: To provide students with opportunities to earn credit for work experiences or life experiences which may be equivalent to knowledge which would be gained in a postsecondary-level course.

Program activity: A number of New York State postsecondary institutions have developed criteria and procedures for assessing knowledge gained through work experience or life experiences. At some institutions, such opportunities are offered as a special course or internship which is related to specific requirements for fulfilling a major. In others, prior work experiences or life experiences are evaluated for credit when a student enrolls at the institution.

Assessment procedures: At some institutions, the criteria for evaluating work experiences is developed jointly by the postsecondary institution and local employers. Also, a number of union and company apprenticeship programs have established relationships with postsecondary institutions in which the institution evaluates the training program and awards academic credit accordingly. Many postsecondary institutions also award credit for life experiences, training or work experiences by assessing the experiences of applicants for admission.

Credit: Credit awards vary depending on the policy of the institution toward credit for work and life experience, and on the amount of credit offered for work experience programs sponsored by the institution.

Contact for further information: Admissions offices at postsecondary institutions.

*This is a general description of a variety of programs developed by individual postsecondary institutions. There are no standard procedures for such programs.

National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (National PONSI)

Program description: The New York Regents National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (National PONSI) reviews programs and courses sponsored by noncollegiate organizations and makes credit recommendations for courses which are determined to be comparable to college level instruction.

Eligibility: Course work must be conducted on a formal basis and sponsoring organizations must officially request an evaluation. These sponsoring organizations include business, industry, governmental agencies, labor unions, professional associations, hospitals, and cultural associations. The eligibility of students to enroll in specific courses and programs is determined by the sponsoring organization.

Program operator: National PONSI is an advisory service of the Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York which operates out of the New York State Education Department in Albany.

Length of program: The length of the review process varies with the number of courses to be reviewed during an on-site visit. Generally, five to seven courses can be reviewed during a one-day session. Setting up and conducting the evaluation, preparing the report, and performing following up work generally entails eight to twelve weeks.

Program objective: The mission of the Program is to increase access to higher education for adults. The Program provides a link that connects the formal course work adults have taken outside a college classroom with college degree programs.

Program activity: Noncollegiate organizations voluntarily submit selected courses and programs for review. With the help of Program staff, organizations supply certain required information on the courses. An on-site visit is arranged and a three-person team is convened to conduct the evaluation of each course or program under the supervision of Program staff. Programs which are recommended for credit are printed in College Credit Recommendations, The Directory of the National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction. This Directory, which contains program and course descriptions and credit recommendations, is distributed to colleges and universities nationwide and serves as a guide to administrators as they consider how to award credit to individuals who have successfully completed evaluated courses and who wish to apply these courses to degree programs.

Assessment procedures: Sponsoring organizations initially submit administrative information on the courses believed to be at the college level. A team of three persons selected from postsecondary institutions and noncollegiate organizations reviews the courses at the location of the sponsoring organization. This evaluation involves reviewing instructional materials, evaluation procedures and instruments, and interviewing organization representatives and instructors. If the team determines that a course is at the college level, they make a specific recommendation about the amount of credit that a college might typically grant for successful completion of the course. Program staff prepare a written report on the results of the evaluation which is verified by the review team. By establishing a credit recommendation for a course, the review team has determined that the method to measure student performance is adequate to judge that students who successfully complete the course have mastered the subject matter.

Credit: The amount of the credit recommendation depends on the consensus decision of the review team. Once a credit recommendation is established, students who have successfully completed a course and wish to receive academic credit, contact their organization representative to request that verification of completed course work be sent to selected educational institution. The verification includes the National PONSI credit recommendation. The credit recommendations have been widely accepted by over 1,300 colleges and universities across the country; however, educational institutions may accept, reject, or modify the credit recommendation based on their academic policies and students' prior educational experience.

Contact for further Information:

Director
National Program on Noncollegiate
Sponsored Instruction
New York State Education Department
Cultural Education Center; Room 5A25
Albany, New York 12230
(518) 434-0118

Regents External Degree Program

Program description: Regents College Degrees is a nontraditional degree-granting program whereby independent students with college-level knowledge earn a degree without attending college.

Eligibility: Open.

Program operator: The University of the State of New York.

Length of program: The time needed to complete a Regents College degree varies according to the ways in which each student chooses to meet degree requirements.

Program objective: To enable individuals with college-level knowledge to earn an undergraduate degree regardless of how this knowledge was acquired.

Program activity: A Regents College degree is an "external" degree in that it is awarded by a university which evaluates students it has not directly taught. The University of the State of New York publishes its requirements for the degree and awards it to anyone who can meet the requirements. The educational experiences that may be used to earn credit for a Regents College degree are:

- College courses, taken for credit, offered by any regionally accredited college or university;
- Proficiency examinations including Regents College Examinations in over forty subjects offered by The University of the State of New York;
- Military service school courses and occupational specialties evaluated and recommended for credit by the American Council on Education (ACE);
- Special Assessment of college-level knowledge gained from independent study or other means for which existing proficiency examinations are not appropriate, offered by Regents College Degrees and Examinations;
- Noncollegiate sponsored instruction such as courses offered by businesses, industry, government agencies or volunteer organizations that have been evaluated for college credit by the New York National or ACE Programs on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction;
- Federal Aviation Administration (formerly Civil Aeronautics Administration) Airman Certificates;
- A combination of these ways of earning credit.

Assessment procedures: Students request that official transcripts of their educational experiences, as described in the program activity section above, be submitted to Regents College Degrees. The program evaluates these transcripts, in terms of acceptability toward meeting degree requirements and the college credits they represent, to measure progress toward a Regents College degree. The program also provides a master transcript of individuals' evaluated educational experiences to institutions or agencies at their request for educational, personal or employment purposes.

Special Assessment is offered by Regents College Degrees to evaluate and award credit for college-level educational experiences for which a proficiency examination is not appropriate. Special Assessment may be used to evaluate learning from on-the-job training, formal course work, independent study, or other learning of postsecondary-level material. The assessment process consists of an individually designed examination conducted by a panel of experts on the subject area being assessed, which usually consists of college faculty.

Credit: Regents College degrees are offered in the liberal arts, business, nursing, and technology. Eight degrees are at the associate level and eight are at the baccalaureate level.

Contact for further information:

The University of the State of New York
Regents College Degrees
Cultural Education Center, Room 5D45
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12230
(518) 474-3703

Regents College Examinations (RCE)

Program description: The University of the State of New York offers Regents College Examinations in a wide variety of subjects.

Eligibility: Open.

Program operator: The University of the State of New York.

Length of program: Most Regents College Examinations are administered six times a year in New York State (and in other states by the American College Testing Program, where they are known as ACT PEP tests). The length of individual tests varies, but most can be completed in a few hours.

Program objective: To permit the many people who acquire college-level knowledge and abilities through nontraditional experiences, such as job training, courses taken in the military, or independent study, to earn college credit for this knowledge.

Program activity: Regents College Examinations test knowledge which is equivalent to the content of one or more semester courses in that subject on a college campus. Subjects covered by the examinations include the arts and sciences, business, education, and nursing. People take Regents College Examinations for many reasons including college credit, job advancement, course prerequisite waivers, salary credits, self-evaluation, employment qualifications, or teacher certification requirements.

Assessment procedures: Regents College Examinations employs faculty members from New York State colleges and universities who serve as consultants to develop the examinations. The consultants also help determine the level of performance needed to achieve a satisfactory grade by administering tests to college students enrolled in traditional courses covering comparable materials. The examinations are designed to test individuals' factual knowledge and their ability to use it effectively.

Formats for the examinations vary and may include multiple-choice, short-answer and essay sections. The examinations are graded on a letter grade, standard scores or pass-fail basis.

Applications: Applications are available from the program office or at many libraries and postsecondary institutions. The Regents College Examinations Office has available content outlines and study guides to help individuals prepare for examinations.

Credit: Each examination carries a certain recommendation for credit award. Most postsecondary institutions accept the examinations for credit, but their policies vary so students intending to take an examination should understand their school's policy on the examinations before taking them.

Contact for further information:

The University of the State of New York
Regents College Examinations
Cultural Education Center, Room 5D45
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12230
(518) 474-3703